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SUBJECT: EC: PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTION CONTINUE, VOTER  
ROLLS GETTING CLEANER

1. (U) Summary. The Chairman of Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC), Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, told a November 13 meeting of the Inter-party Advisory Committee (IPAC) that progress was being made in cleaning the voter rolls, with nearly 350,000 names deleted in an on-going program. Afari-Gyan told the IPAC members that meetings with parliamentary candidates and training of party polling agents would happen in November. A new look ballot form was unveiled, and voters will now get a full finger dipped in indelible ink to reduce the possibility of double voting opportunities. Party reps and the EC agreed on an additional step to reduce ballot box tampering.

2 (U) Chairman Afari-Gyan began the session by saying that the EC had removed 349,610 names from the voter rolls as a result of the on-going cleansing exercise. The process was continuing, alphabetically (it was not asked what letter the EC was currently working on) and more names would be deleted. Those deleted include 76,234 found to be double or multiple registrants. During the recent limited voter registration exercise, 1,835,417 people had registered, or about 800,000 more than expected. The parties questioned what would happen to those incorrectly deleted. Afari-Gyan said that the EC was instructing polling officers to "give the benefit of the doubt" and not challenge any individual with a valid voter ID and whose name was on the voting list. He noted that school head teachers were being asked to tell under age children who registered that they should not vote. Afari-Gyan said that he was "quite certain we won't see those little kids in the queue on election day." This week the parties were to be given CDs containing the voter registration list, broken down by Ghana's ten regions.

3.(U) Pre-election preparations continue, according to Afari-Gyan. The printing of ballots is progressing well, according to the chairman. He unveiled a new look ballot, designed to make it more difficult to a voter to accidentally put a thumbprint over the boxes for two candidates, leading to spoiled ballots. Party polling agents will receive training during the week of November 21. The EC will meet with parliamentary candidates during November 17-25 in order to review election rules and procedures. The EC has held IPAC meetings at the regional level. In a change from previous years, the EC will require voters to dip their entire finger into India Ink to identify that they have voted and to discourage efforts at double voting. A representative of the opposition National Democratic Congress expressed concerns about possible election day ballot box swapping. Afari-Gyan agreed to allow the parties to put their own seals on the boxes, to allow for identification. (Note: The EC also seals the boxes, each with a unique serial number).

4 (SBU) Comment. Afari-Gyan's announcement of the removal of 350,000 names from the voter rolls elicited limited questioning from the party representatives--such as who the people were, a breakdown by region, or more details about the methodology used by the EC. Diplomats attending IPAC meetings are not, by convention, allowed to ask questions. An observer

is therefore sometimes left to wonder why party  
representatives hold some issues to be more important than  
others. End Comment.  
TEITELBAUM